

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling phone users of a teleconferencing system to participate in an instant messaging based conference managed by an instant messaging system, comprising the steps of:

~~receiving a PSTN telephone call at a PSTN-based teleconferencing system from a PSTN-based telephone, wherein said teleconferencing system is communicatively linked to an instant messaging system managing conference, wherein providing a speech processing system coupled between said teleconferencing system and said messaging system are directly coupled by a speech processing system;~~

receiving at said speech processing system a speech input received by said PSTN teleconferencing system from a telephone connected to the teleconferencing system;

transcribing the speech input to a first text message using said speech processing system;

transmitting the first text message to a plurality of devices participating in the instant messaging based conference;

receiving at said speech processing system a second text message from any one among the plurality of devices participating in the instant messaging based conference;

converting the second text message to a speech output; and

transmitting the speech output to the telephone via the ~~PSTN-based~~ teleconferencing system.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of converting the second text message further comprises the step of using a simulated voice print of the user associated with any one among the plurality of devices to provide the speech output with a personalized voice output at the telephone.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said speech subsystem converts the second text message to the speech output by using text-to-speech conversion.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of translating the first text message to another language to provide a translated first text message.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
prior to said step of receiving a speech input, identifying a user associated with said PSTN telephone;

prior to said converting step, translating the second text message to another language to provide a translated second text message for subsequent speech output, wherein said another language is specified by a profile associated with said identified user associated with said telephone.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the first text message comprises the step of transmitting a text stream.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A system for enabling phone users to participate in an instant messaging based conference, comprising:

an instant messaging subsystem ~~having a data network port for~~ managing a plurality of instant messaging devices participating in said instant messaging based conference;

a PSTN teleconferencing subsystem, ~~having a PSTN network input port for~~ receiving calls a speech input from a ~~ealling party's~~ PSTN calling party at a telephone connected to the teleconferencing subsystem; and

a speech processing subsystem ~~directly~~ coupling said instant messaging and said teleconferencing subsystems, wherein said speech processing subsystem comprises:

a speech-to-text converter for converting ~~a ealling party's~~ the speech input to a text message for transmission to said participating devices using said instant messaging subsystem; and

a text-to-speech converter for converting text messages received from any one among the participating devices to a speech output for transmission to said PSTN telephone using the PSTN teleconferencing subsystem.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein said instant messaging devices are selected from the group of devices comprising a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a smartphone.

11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the system further comprises a translator for translating the text message into another language for

transmission to at least one among said instant messaging devices as translated text and to said telephone as a translated speech output.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the text-to-speech converter uses a simulated voice print of the called party in producing the audible output.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the instant messaging device further comprises a display for displaying at least one among the text message from the calling party and text messages from the instant messaging device.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the text messages are received and transmitted over said instant messaging subsystem in substantially real-time.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the text messages are received and transmitted over said instant messaging subsystem using data transmission protocols.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the system further comprises a user profile data store for storing a plurality of user profiles associated with at least one among the calling party and the participating instant messaging devices, wherein said user profiles specify whether to convert at least one among text messages from an instant messaging device into a customized speech output for transmission to the calling party and text messages from the calling party to alternate text messages as defined by a user.

18. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

~~receiving a PSTN telephone call at a PSTN-based teleconferencing system from a PSTN-based telephone, wherein said teleconferencing system is communicatively linked to an instant messaging system managing an instant message-based conference, wherein~~
providing a speech processing system coupled between a said teleconferencing system and said an instant messaging system managing an instant messaging based conference
~~are directly coupled by a speech processing system;~~

receiving at said speech processing system a speech input received by said PSTN teleconferencing system from a telephone connected to the teleconferencing system;

transcribing the speech input to a first text message using said speech processing system;

transmitting the first text message to a plurality of devices participating in the instant messaging based conference;

receiving at said speech processing system a second text message from any one among the plurality of devices participating in the instant messaging based conference;

converting the second text message to a speech output; and

transmitting the speech output to the telephone via the PSTN-based teleconferencing system.

19. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable storage of claim 18, further comprising code sections for translating at least one among the first text message to an alternate first text message and the second text message to an alternate second text message for transmission as a speech output.